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ALLAMA IQBAL'S POEM "MUSNAVI PAS CHE BAYED KARD" AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE: A CRITICAL STUDY

Dr Saira Batool

Assistant Professor, Department of Urdu International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Email: sairabatool@iiu.edu.pk

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ABSTRACT

Allama Iqbal's epic poem "Musnavi Pas Che Bayed Kard" (So, what should be done?), published in 1936, is considered not only a critique of the situation and events of his time but also suggests to the nations of the East, in general, and the Muslim Ummah, in particular, the solution to come out of the intellectual and political shackles of the West. Emphasizing the fact that the West owes its current glory and advancement to the Eastern civilization and Islamic philosophy, Allama Iqbal has highlighted and differentiated between the just divine world order spearheaded by the institution of prophethood as opposed to the exploitative imperialistic and capitalist order of the day in the garb of Western democracy. The current article is an attempt to draw lessons from the subject poem and the message contained therein, besides its relevance to the present ideological, intellectual, political and economic chaos faced by the Eastern nations as well as the Muslim nations all over the world in comparison to the Western hegemony superimposed by the Western culture and its exploitative world order through its democratic system and financial and banking institutions such as World Bank and IMF.

INTRODUCTION

Allama Iqbal's Poem "Musnavi Pas Che Bayed Kard" (So, what should be done?) was published in 1936. This is a critique of the situation and events of his time. In this poem, Allama Iqbal shows a mirror to the nations of the East and informs them of all the evils due to which the British established their dominance over the East. Allama was a visionary poet whose poetry and prose presented a specific ideology and roadmap. He examined the conditions of the East and West and drew conclusions. Allama Iqbal has tried to find a solution to the decline of human values that had engulfed the East. In this Masnavi, Allama Iqbal is seen trying hard to wake up the sleeping nation and guide them on the path of progress and prosperity through his poetry.

Allama Iqbal's Masnavi is such an inspirational force that it shows the youth their true potential and identity. Dr Tahseen Farooqi says that though Iqbal had written many such poems before, the subject Masnavi is the pinnacle of all, wherein he has spilled all of his wisdom pearls. He further comments:

"If it is asked in one sentence, what is the purpose of the creation of the Masnavi (pas che bayed krad), the answer would be: the revitalization of the East, especially the Islamic nations". (1)

Allama Iqbal was convinced that the East's history is rich in moral, social and religious virtues, and all the new civilizations have been intellectually imbibed from the East. Iqbal had complete confidence that though the nations of the East were in deep slumber, they were not dead yet. They need to be awakened, as once the sleeping conscience of the East is awakened, they will soon regain their lost glory and stature in the world.

In the above-mentioned Masnavi, Iqbal has discussed the concepts of intellect and love, politics, emancipated man, and religious and Quranic facts. At the beginning of Masnavi, Allama says:

سپاہ تازہ بر انگیز از ولایت عشق
کہ در حرم خطرے از بغاوت خرد است (2)

(I am setting in motion a new army from the kingdom of love, as there is a danger of rebellion in the shrine.)

The very title of Allama Iqbal's poem "پس چه باید کرد اے اقوام مشرق" (What Should Be Done O People of the East?) seems to be an answer to the problems and challenges of the present age. Through this, he has suggested the strategies and measures to be adopted for the Muslim Ummah and the nations of the East. The poem identifies political, economic, social, cultural and national problems and presents workable solutions.

According to Allama Iqbal, the authentic heritage of Muslims is fervour and passion for knowledge and wisdom. Allama Iqbal has likened the Holy Quran to beauty for Muslims and interpreted wisdom as glory. In the Masnavi, Allama repeatedly emphasized that the wisdom and knowledge did not originally belong to the British people, as was assumed or being asserted, but it reached the West through the Muslims and only after learning from the Muslims did the West establish its supremacy in the world.

In Allama's Masnavi, we find a forceful expression of an emphasis on religious facts and Quranic wisdom. Similarly, Allama Iqbal has described the importance of prophethood in the poem "حکمت کلیمی", saying that the prophethood is a revolutionary message and it rejects the kingdom and worldly glory, as the prophet is a person who is not impressed or desirous of the power of the throne. Besides his poem "حکمت کلیمی", Allama has described in his other poem "حکمت فرعونى" the conditions of those nations which have lost their values under the influence of their rulers.

Allama Iqbal has presented a recipe to the Eastern people to get out of slavish thinking in the above-mentioned Masnavi and informed them about the pharaonic problems eroding the values of the East, like termites. Allama Iqbal says in his poem "حکمت فرعونى":

ملتى	خاکستر	او	بى	شرر
صبح او از شام او تاريکتر				
بر زمان	اندر	تلاش	ساز	برگ
کار او فکر معاش و ترس مرگ				
منعمان	او	و	عیش	دوست
غافل از مغزاند و اندر بند پوست				
قوت	فرمانروا		معبود	او
در زیان دین و ایمان سود او				
از حد	امروز	خود	بیرون	نجست
روزگارش نقش یک فردا نیست				
از نیاکان		دقتری	اندر	بغل
الامان از گفته های بے عمل				
دین او	عهد	وفا	بستن	بغیر
یعنی از خشت حرم تعمیر دیر				
آه قومی	دل	ز	حق	پرداخته
مرد و مرگ خویش را نشناخته				
(A nation whose ashes are devoid of any live spark,				
Whose morn is darker than its eve?				
It is always in search of material goods,				
Its only preoccupation is anxiety for livelihood and fear of death.				
Its rich are miserly, pleasure-loving,				
Intent upon seeking the shell and neglectful of the kernel.				
The might of its ruler is the object of its adoration,				
In loss of faith and belief lies its gain.				
It never looks beyond its today				
And never creates a tomorrow for itself.				
It has the annals of its ancestors under its arms,				
But, alas! It only discourses on them without acting on them.				
Its creed is to offer loyalty to others,				
To build temples with the material of the mosque.				
Alas! for a nation which has cut itself adrift from God,				
Which is dead but does not know that it is dead).				

In the subject Masnavi, Iqbal has explained that humanity is travelling towards destruction at the hands of the English. Due to the cunningness of the British people, the life of the eastern nations has become devoid of enthusiasm.

Allama Iqbal is inquiring about what should be done now, O people of the East? Answering the question by himself, Iqbal says in the next stanza that the era of the East was shining again.

Iqbal says:

پس چه باید کرد اے اقوام شرق؟
باز روشن کی شود ایام شرق۔

(What should then be done, O people of the East?
--

That the life of the East may once again brighten up)

Throughout the Masnavi, Allama exhorts the Muslims and especially the youth, to stand up and break the shackles of mental slavery, follow the Islamic teachings, get out of past stories of greatness, highlight the qualities of a man of faith, and know and avoid the tricks and treachery of the West.

Among the requirements of the present age, the greatest is obedience to Allah and His Messenger Muhammad (SAW). Unless Islamic values are adhered to, society can never progress on the path of development. A century ago, Allama Iqbal had sensed and predicted the rapid spread of hypocrisy in today's society, the destruction of the collective and individual consciousness of the nation, and the indolence of the youth.

Allama has advised the youth to increase their intellectual horizon and gain freedom from the bondage of race and colour, to believe in themselves and not to be enamoured by the glory of Europe. In the above-mentioned Masnavi, Iqbal says:

اے اسپر رنگ پاک از رنگ شو
(4) مومن خود، کافر افرنگ شو

(O you who are enamoured of colour, rise above colour;
--

have faith in yourself, deny the Franks)
--

Addressing today's youth, Allama says that profit and loss are in your own hands, O youth, if you are convinced of ease and comfort, then no one can save the East from destruction. Iqbal says that the honour of the East is in the hands of the youth:

رشته سود و زیان در دست تست
آبروے خارواں در دست تست (5)

(The strings of gain and loss are in your hands,
--

the honour of the East depends on you)
--

Allama Iqbal, in "Mard-e-Hur", has expressed regret for this nation which gave birth to sultans and kings but could not free them from mental slavery. Iqbal regrets that in this nation, no dervish could be born. Allama Iqbal is convinced of "Faqr-e- Hydari" and "Azmat-e- Hussain" in the youth. Iqbal says in his poem " فقر":

فقر عریان گرمی بدر و حنین
(6) فقر عریان بانگ تکبیر حسین

(Naked Faqr is the warmth of Badr and Hunain, it is the sound of Husain's takbir)
--

In his poem "حرفے چند با امت عربیہ" Iqbal reminds the Arabs of their history and traditions, which they are forgetting. Iqbal expressed concern and regret over the present state of the Muslims and, at the same time, advised the Muslim nation to be safe from the evil of the West. Because according to Iqbal, the West is a nation that is playing tricks day and night to shatter the unity of the Muslim nation. Allama is seen trying to bring back honour to the Muslim nation, saying:

"حرفے چند با امت عربیہ"

امت بودی امم گرویده ای بزم خود را خود زہم پوشیده ای
--

(You were a single nation; you have now become several nations, you have broken up your society yourself)

Iqbal has also exposed the rule and monarchy hidden behind democracy in his poem "سیاست حاضرہ". Iqbal also describes democracy as a strategy of the monarchy. Iqbal was not against the democratic form of government, but he was sad that even democracy could not cure the sufferings of man, and it also has the stamp of the monarchy. Due to the royal aspects of democracy, Iqbal, in his poem "ارمغان حجاز" has called it a trick of the devilish system of politics:

ہم نے خود شاہی کو پہنایا ہے جمہوری لباس
جب ذرا آدم ہوا ہے خود شناس و خود نگر

(We have clothed the monarchy with the garb of democracy
When a man has become self-aware and self-conscious)

According to Allama Iqbal, only Allah Almighty is the owner of supreme power.

In this regard, Professor Fateh Mohammad Malik writes:

According to Iqbal, Europe is not capable of fulfilling this duty. The democratic system of the West has become a means of sucking the blood of the poor for the sake of achieving the interests of the rich. This system considers it permissible to allow the exploitation of the poor for the protection and development of the

economic interests of the rich. The result is that today's Europe is the cause of great obstacles in the moral and spiritual development of man. (7)

All these troubles can be avoided only by following the principles of Islam. Only by following the universal principles of Islam can a person succeed in escaping the trap of economic hardships and suffering.

In his poem "سیاسیات حاضرہ", Iqbal has sketched the spiritual and moral condition of Muslim leaders. Iqbal laments that Muslim leaders have gone far away from Islam, which is the reason for their downfall. The Muslim of today is void of "قلب منور" (enlightened heart); although he was born into a Muslim family, unfortunately, he is slavishly impressed by the West and its civilization:

در حرم کلیسا زاد و کلیسا را مرید
پردہ ناموس مارا بردرید (8)

(He was born a Muslim but is a disciple of the church,
He rent the veil of our honour asunder)

Apart from the leader, the entire Muslim nation has followed the same path. Our nation has forgotten itself and relied on others other than Allah. Although they believe in monotheism, there is not a single person among them who dares to speak the truth against falsehood. Iqbal is addressing the Muslims: How long will you remain in Satan's trap? So how long will he live like a straw in the sea and become hard as a mountain by self-control?

زیستن تا کہ بہ بحر اندر چو خس
سخت شوچوں کوہ از ضبط نفس

(How long to live in the ocean like a floating straw?
Become hard like a mountain through self-control)

The above comment of Iqbal was made about the Muslim leaders and people of that era, but it seems that this comment was made about the Pakistani leaders of today. Our leaders themselves live in magnificent palaces. While people's lives sometimes become the sight of floods, sometimes disease breaks them, and sometimes they lose their lives due to earthquakes. Their honour and dignity have been pledged. The rich look down upon the poor. The ruling class is only engaged in acquiring properties. Loans are being taken daily from IMF and other western institutions, due to which the country is going towards decline.

Kaneez Fatima Yusuf writes:

"The landed aristocracy was unfamiliar with governance and civil administration dynamics. When this landlord occupied the posts of the ministries, his ambition was not to establish a strong and lasting government for Pakistan but to provide better facilities for his estates and subjects. With the help of his designated DCs and SPs, he increased his control over the people more than ever before."

Iqbal has said in the Masnavi that a slave person lives away from the spirit of his religion. He addresses the Muslims and says O Muslims! Your hearts are full of love for idols, i.e. deities other than Allah. Your hearts are empty of love for Allah and His Messenger. Allama Iqbal says, O Muslims, until you adopt the high morals of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him), do not pollute the name of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by reciting your salutations and blessings upon him:

تا نداری از محمد رنگ و بو
از درود خود میالانما او (10)

(So long as you do not have the colour of Muhammad,
Do not pollute his name with your salutations).

So, in a nutshell, the present age requires that Muslims should be mentally independent first, make their own decisions and spread Islam to every corner of the world. They should get freedom from British slavery, which they got into due to their distance from Islam and wrong political strategy. The western financial and interest-based banking system and all such un-Islamic exploitative laws must be eliminated. This is the demand of the present time, and here lies the answer to the challenges facing the Islamic Ummah, especially its youth.

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